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Thirty Lessons For an Easier Watergate: Do It Yourself

Anyone who wants to pull his own Watergate can learn how for less than \$10.

An organization calling itself the Police Electronics Institute sells a simple, do-it-yourself wiretapping and electronic eavesdropping manual that promises to teach "how experts earn \$40,000 to \$100,000 per year."

The manual cautions that the wiretapper's trade is illegal but offers this observation: "The illegal tapper, like the speeding motorist, takes his chances, but the tapper's gamble is generally more lucrative."

While government officials say it is legal to distribute eavesdropping and wiretapping information, it is illegal for private individuals to possess or use bugging or wiretap equipment. And the head of a govern-

ment investigation of wiretapping expressed concern that easy access to such information will encourage private citizens to break the law.

The Police Electronics Institute has a Chicago address that appears to be only a mailing point for persons ordering the 30-lesson manual, costing \$9.95.

The institute is not listed in the Chicago telephone directory, and police there said they have never heard of the organization. They describe the mailing address as "a two-family flat on Chicago's North Side."

Called the "Electronic Investigation and Secure Communications Course," the manual states in the beginning that "regardless of restrictions against bugging and wiretapping, there will always be those to whom

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obtaining information is more important than the risk involved."

In response to its own question in the first lesson, "How Do You Become a Wiretapper?" the manual states: "Paradoxically, one can start in this highly paid profession with no training whatsoever. No electronic experience is required to start."

What follows are some 90 pages of definitions, descriptions, diagrams and uses for various wiretap and bugging devices, as well as detailed instructions on how to install them in telephones, rooms and automobiles.

For the inexperienced tapper, the manual offers this warning: the bugged martini olive, a tiny transmitter designed to look like an olive, will "not work while im-

mersed in a martini."

The manual claims that would-be tappers are not the only ones who would benefit from buying the book and suggests that anti-tap security experts also would gain.

"To do the anti-tap work, you must have the knowledge of the tapper and be able to think like a tapper," the manual says.

For this reason, "The point of view of the manual often approaches the subject from the point of view of the tapper," the manual says.

The manual claims the course is "offered to individuals involved with or about to enter law enforcement, security work or allied fields." Yet, when a private citizen wrote for a manual, no check was made to see why he wanted it or how he would use the information.

A government official says he is concerned about this easy access.

"The problem is there is apparently no control on whom the book is sent to," said Michael Hershman, chief investigator for the National Wiretap Commission, a government agency created to study wiretaps. "What they're doing is planting information in the hands of individuals who very well might use it to break the law."

Hershman, a former Senate Watergate Committee investigator, is now in charge of evaluating the government's electronic laws. "The book makes it easy to build and utilize electronic devices," he said. "And we have no idea how many people have access to this information."